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Men, Women, and Boys: Love and Sex in the Works of SA'DI

Minoo S. Southgate

Comprising some 900 pages in the Furughi edition, the works of Sa'di include a variety of genres. The *Kulliyat* (Complete Works)¹ opens with six "Risalahs" (Homilies), containing orthodox religious and moral teachings. The homilies precede the worldly and anecdotal "Gulistan" (Rose Garden) and the more profound and spiritual "Bustan" (Orchard)--Sa'di's best known works. Next are the "Qasa'id" (Elegies, or Odes) in Persian and Arabic, the "Marasi" (Threnodies), and the "Mulamma'at" (Bilingual poems in Persian and Arabic). The "Tarji'at" (Strophe Poems), the "Tayyibat" (Sweet Poems), the "Badayi'" (Cunning Odes), the "Khavatin" (Gems), and "Ghazaliyyat-i qadim" (Old Sonnets)--altogether 300 pages in the *Kulliyat*--consist mostly of love poems, covering the whole gamut of this emotion from the secular love of women and boys to the mystical love whose object is union with the divine. Miscellaneous shorter pieces appear at the end of the *Kulliyat* under the headings "Sahibiyyah," "Masnaviyyat" (Couplets), "Qata'at" (Short Poems), "Ruba'iyyat" (Quatrains), and "Mufradat" (One-liners). Sa'di is also the author of "Khubsiiyyat va majalis al-hazl" (Impure Things and Facetiae), better known as "Hazliyyat"²--crude pornographic pieces relegated to the end of the *Kulliyat* in manuscripts and early editions, but altogether omitted from the Furughi edition.³ While most Sa'di scholars are somewhat apologetic about the "Hazliyyat," Alessandro Bausani sees these and similar writings as "the

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only example of realism in traditional Persian literature...."⁴ Indeed, not only the "Hazliyyat" but also the "Gulistan" and "Bustan" are less stylized and less abstract than most medieval Iranian literature and therefore better guides to life in Iran in Sa'di's time.

Sa'di's education and his extensive travels and long life (born c. 1213-1219, died 1292) enriched his work. His education in religion and the humanities began in his birth place, Shiraz, and continued at the Nizamiyyah of Baghdad. He studied under famous teachers like Shaykh Shahab al-Din Suhrawardi and Shaykh Abu al-Faraj ibn al-Jawzi (the grandson of the great Jawzi).⁶ Extensive travel exposed him to a variety of people and places. In the autobiographic anecdotes of the "Gulistan" and "Bustan" he claims to have visited Mecca, Tabriz, Damascus, Ba'lbak (Heliopolis), Tripoli, Alexandria, Basra, Kufa, the Kish Island, Balkh, Kashghar, Iraq, Syria, Somnath, Ethiopia, and San'a.⁷ Several anecdotes tell of his preaching at the cathedral mosque of Ba'lbak, his fighting in the Crusades, his captivity by the Franks in Aleppo, and his adventure in the pagoda in Somnath, where to save his life he had to kill a man.⁸ Sa'di was a man of his time. A genial observer of his contemporaries, he was not superior to them in his manners and morals.⁹ Among his works are moral tales, Sufi poems, and writings revealing orthodox Muslim beliefs. But he was neither a moralist, nor a Sufi or saint; and he was at times inconsistent. Sometimes his love of humanity transcended nationality, religion, and race:

The sons of Adam are limbs of each other
Having been created of one essence.
When the calamity of life afflicts one limb
The other limbs cannot remain at rest.
If thou hast not sympathy for the troubles of others
Thou are unworthy to be called by the name of a man.¹⁰

And sometimes he shared his contemporaries' religious, racial, and sexual prejudices.¹¹ Judged by J. Rypka to be "one of the most lively and colorful figures in Persian and indeed world literature,"¹² Sa'di created a world that mirrors his time. In the present paper, the *Kulliyat* is examined particularly for the light it sheds on the attitude of Sa'di and his contemporaries toward women, marriage, the love of boys, and mystical love.

Not knowing the composition dates of Sa'di's works aside from the dates of the "Bustan" (1257) and the "Gulistan" (1258), we cannot trace Sa'di's development with certainty. Even the "Bustan" and "Gulistan" existed in draft form for many years and their dates refer merely to the years in which they were put in final form.¹³ We may conjecture, however, that the pornographic writings, the secular love poems, and the homosexual anecdotes of the "Gulistan" were written in the poet's youth, while the homilies, the *Qasidahs*, and the mystical love poems were the fruit of his mature years. This scheme, however, overlooks the fact that in medieval Iran poetry was often governed by convention rather than conviction, and by the demands of the patron rather than the sentiments of the poet. Whatever the order of their composition, the range of Sa'di's works attests to the poet's versatility and his tolerance and broad-mindedness. Moreover, apparently Sa'di's contemporary readers found no incongruity between the autobiographic homosexual episodes of the "Gulistan" or the deliberate obscenity of the "Hazliyyat" on the one hand, and the devout homilies and the religious prologue to the "Bustan" on the other. Such tolerance is absent in medieval Europe and rare even in later periods. Sa'di enjoyed fame and respect in his lifetime and became, in old age, the object of pilgrimage by his devotees.¹⁴ The modern reader is puzzled by the disparity between the orthodox sentiments of the religious writings or the refined passion of the mystical poems on the one hand, and the lustful pornographic pieces on sodomy and seduction of boys on the other. The modern editor resolves the conflict by omitting the latter from the *Kulliyat*. Faced with the same dilemma, English translators even in the tamer episodes of the "Gulistan" turn boys into girls and change anecdotes about pederasty into tales of heterosexual love.¹⁵ Perhaps Sa'di's contemporaries accepted the pornographic with the religious as a reflection of the contrary claims of the body and the soul. They did not attempt to resolve the conflict by sacrificing the body, as medieval Christianity tried to do. In the words of Robert Surieu:

Yearning always for the absolute, and refined by thousands of years of spiritual and artistic striving, the Persian soul is nevertheless very far from despising the ordinary human joys: indeed it displays infinite ingenuity in savouring them in all

their range and variety....[The] greatest poets of Iran accepted and appreciated all the different forms of love, seeing in each of them a fresh means of fulfillment, no matter whether they ran counter to the strict laws of morality or were exalted by the sublimity of their object.¹⁶

Women in Sa'di's Works

Dealing with passionate love for an idealized love object, Sa'di's love poems are conventional, stylized, and abstract, providing little specific information about love relations in his time. Occasionally the beloved is addressed as a boy or youth (*pisar*, *ghulam*, *kudak*, *shahid*). Sometimes a line such as the following identifies the love object as a female:

The beloved's breast in the ringlet of hair
Is an ivory ball couched in an ebony polostick.¹⁷

But in most poems the beloved's sex is not identified, since Persian does not indicate gender and because the poet employs identical stock images to describe the beauty of boys and women. The face is compared to the moon, the eyes to the narcissus, the lips to rubies, the teeth to pearls, and the figure to the cypress or boxwood. Love is passionate and desperate. The speaker idealizes the beloved and complains of his/her cruelty, but the poem remains general and abstract, dealing with the emotion of love rather than attempting to depict a specific lover or beloved in Sa'di's contemporary society. Sa'di's love poems do not reveal how or where lovers met in the sexually segregated Islamic society. They do not individualize the lover or the beloved and give almost no detail by way of a setting. Images of life in Sa'di's contemporary society are much more vivid in the "Gulistan," the "Bustan," and the "Hazliyyat"; but these works treat of the relationship between men and boys and of friendship among men, and say little about heterosexual relationships. Women do not figure prominently in Sa'di's realistic works partly because of their low status in Islamic Iran and partly because they had ceased to be the object of romantic love:

Whether girl, wife or paid concubine, a woman was... confined to the harem and had no social contact with men; she left her house, strictly veiled and guarded, only to go to the baths or to visit her female friends. There was thus no possibility of amorous intrigue, still less of an active love affair.¹⁸

Heterosexual love is singularly absent from the fifth chapter of the "Gulistan," entitled "On Love and Youth," and from the third chapter of the "Bustan," entitled "On Love, Intoxication, and Delirium." These chapters deal, instead, mostly with the mystical or profane love of men for youths, as we shall see later. Sa'di alludes to legendary heterosexual lovers like Laila and Majnun and Farhad and Shirin but includes no anecdotes of passionate love between contemporary men and women.¹⁹ Instead of love, most heterosexual anecdotes in the "Gulistan" and "Bustan" deal with marital discord.

The pornographic pieces reveal extreme hostility toward women. The men in the anecdotes of the "Hazliyyat" show contempt for women and prefer boys, catamites, or other men for sexual relations. If they must have sex with a woman, they prefer anal intercourse.²⁰ As we shall see, the low regard for women observed in Sa'di's work is typical of his time.

The Persian word *zan* (woman, wife) has negative connotations suggesting deficiency, while *mard* (man) and *mardanah* (manly, belonging to men) have positive connotations.²¹ The notion of woman's inferiority to man appears in the Quran itself: "Men are in charge of women, because Allah hath made the one of them to excel the other, and because they spend of their property for the support of women. So good women are the obedient."²² The Quran also speaks of woman's cunning. In the sura of Joseph, discovering his wife's falsehood Potiphar exclaims:

"Behold!
It is a snare of you women!
Truly mighty is your snare!"²³

Potiphar's statement is echoed in the Arabic proverb *al-nisa' haba'il al-shaytan* (Women are the devil's snares), and in this verse by Rumi (1207-73):

Verily the snare of women is mighty;
It brings down the soul from the sky....²⁴

On the same theme, eleventh-century poet Asadi states:

He who is not afraid of woman's cunning
Is a stranger to wisdom and prudence.

Women are able to hide their true nature, Asadi warns:

Women are like trees, green to the eye,
But bearing poisonous fruit in secret.²⁵

Similar negative sentiments are also expressed by characters in the twelfth-century romances of the poet Nizami.²⁶

Although considered cunning, woman is also thought to be deficient in intelligence (*naqis al-'aql*). The hadith *Hunna naqisat al-'aql wa-al-din* (women are deficient in intelligence and religion) is echoed by poet-philosopher Nasir-i Khusraw (b. 1003):

Since women are deficient in intelligence and religion,
Why should men choose women's ways?²⁷

According to Nasir al-Din Tusi (1201-74) in his book of ethics *Akhlaq-i Nasiri*, the woman's deficient intelligence inclines her to commit evil. In his chapter "The Chastisement of Wives," Tusi advises men to eschew polygamy because "women are impelled, by the jealousy rooted in their natures, operating together with their *deficiency in intelligence*, to give way to abominations and ignominies, and to such other acts as necessarily bring about the corruption of the household, evil association, a disagreeable existence and a want of order...."²⁸

In the eleventh-century epic the *Shahnamah* of Firdawsi, women are said to be preoccupied with the lower things in life:

Women do not gain a high name,
For they do nothing but eat and sleep.²⁹

In a famous couplet, though one omitted by many editors of the *Shahnamah*, we are told that "Women and dragons are best

when buried," and that it were best if the world were untainted by woman.³⁰ Elsewhere Firdawsi warns that woman's heart is the seat of *div* (devil or demon).³¹

In Fakhr al-Din Gurgani's romance of *Vis and Ramin* (1040-54), the heroine herself disparages women:

Women are created incomplete; thus they are self-obsessed and of ill repute. They lose this world and the next simply for one desire; when desire comes on them they do not seek a good name by virtue of reason....Though women have many wives, they swallow empty words and speeches from men....³²

In Jami's fifteenth-century allegorical romance *Salaman va Absal*, passion for women is considered base and degrading, for its object is "A thing deficient in reason and faith;/there is nothing so deficient in the whole world."³³ In a long speech in condemnation of woman, a "philosopher" and "benevolent sage" states: "it is far removed from the conduct of perfect men/to be, month and year, the plaything of defective creatures;/in the eyes of the perfect man, a leader by his knowledge,/the defective's plaything is inferior even to the defective."

The sage also condemns woman for being unfaithful, ungrateful, and dishonest:

Though her cheek be a tablet of purity,
that tablet is utterly bare of the word fidelity.
Who ever saw faithfulness in a woman in this world?
Who ever saw anything but craftiness and treachery?
.....
If you are old, she must needs have another lover,
A companion more vigorous than you....

These condemnations are followed by an anecdote about Solomon's wife Bilqays (the Queen of Sheba), who confesses that she desires every young man she sets eyes on. The sage comments:

Such is the state of women of good character;
let us not discuss the woman of evil character:
Master Firdausi, whose wisdom you well know,
uttered scathing maledictions against the good woman;

how should the vicious woman ever become virtuous?
Good men will certainly hold her worthy of malediction.

Like Hippolytus in Euripides' tragedy,³⁴ the sage in Jami's romance bemoans the fact that man must succumb to passion "without which the procreation of children is not known." However, while Hippolytus can only wish that men could acquire sons without woman's collaboration, the sage actually contrives "the birth of a son without the collaboration of women":

He drew from the king's loins without passion a sperm
which he deposited in a certain place--not a womb;
after nine months there issued from that place
an infant without blemish....³⁵

Although created without the taint of passion, the hero, Absal, falls passionately in love. As the opening sections of the romance suggest, however, the work does not celebrate passion but concludes with its rejection.³⁶

As we have seen, woman is disparaged even in the courtly romance, a genre which of necessity must idealize woman--how else is a man to be in love with her?

Only as wife and mother, and especially as the latter, can woman redeem herself; even then, she is little more than a drain on her father's and husband's assets. The author of the *Qabusnamah* (1083) tells his son that "it were best for a girl not to come into existence, but, being born, she had better be married or be buried...but as long as she is in your house, treat your daughter with compassion."³⁷

Destined for marriage and motherhood, the girl is trained to be submissive and docile and to limit her horizon. Some medieval sources advise against teaching females to read and write. "When she grows up," says the *Qabusnamah*, "entrust her to a preceptor so that she shall learn the provisions of the sacred law and the essential religious duties. But do not teach her to read and write; that is a great calamity."³⁸ This notion also occurs in *Akhlaq-i Nasiri*, in "The Education of Offspring," a chapter which devotes eleven pages to sons but only the following passage to daughters: "They should be brought up to keep close to the house and live in seclusion, cultivating gravity, con-

tinence, modesty and the other qualities we have enumerated in the chapter on wives. They should be prevented from learning to read or write, but allowed to acquire such accomplishments as are commendable in women. When they reach the bounds of maturity they should be joined to one of equal standing."³⁹

Since marriage and motherhood are the woman's destiny, chastity is the virtue most prized in her. The chaste, obedient woman earns the approval of most writers, except for pessimists like Firdawsi, who maintains that "A dog is far better than a hundred chaste women."⁴⁰

As we have seen, negative remarks about women can occur in any genre of medieval Iranian literature as well as in nonliterary writings. The works of the poet-philosopher Nasir-i Khusraw, the epic poet Firdawsi, the romance writers Nizami and Jami, and the moralist Nasir al-Din Tusi all reflect a low regard for women. Sa'di's work is no exception and his negative view of women is often expressed casually, when he is criticizing a mode of conduct and chooses woman as a negative example to make his point. In the "Second Treatise," where he encourages the reader to transcend this world, he states: "Verily the life of this world is a game and games are for children as adornments and ornaments are the preoccupation of women."⁴¹ Here it is not Sa'di's primary intention to criticize woman, though he selects her as a negative example and places her in the same category as children.

In Sa'di, a cowardly man is likened to a woman, for woman is characterized by timidity. In Tusi's system of ethics timidity in men is a flaw, signifying "lack of self-regard, weakness of nature, faint-heartedness, and...affinity with the characters of women and children."⁴² In the "Gulistan" a prince exhorts his men to fight bravely or else "put on the garments of women." "These words augmented the rage of the troopers so that they...gained the victory...."⁴³

In addition to being thought a coward, woman is judged to be of low moral character. In the "Bustan," a man instructed to murder another refrains from doing so when he discovers that his potential victim is righteous and benevolent. "If but a rose I lay upon your person,/No man am I

before man's eyes--a woman, rather!" he tells the man he was to kill, thus associating woman with villainy and man with moral character.⁴⁴ The same sentiment is also expressed in Sa'di's aphorisms.

A man without compassion (*mard-i bi muruvvat*) is a woman, and an avaricious worshipper is a highwayman. Consulting women shows poor judgment, and generosity to evil doers constitutes a sin.⁴⁵

In literary works, the notion of man's superior moral character is subscribed to even by female characters. "Manliness and generosity (*javanmardi*) belong to men, and if a woman does the manly and generous thing she is a man," says a woman in al-Arjani's *Samak-i 'ayyar* (eleventh to twelfth century).⁴⁶ Similarly, in Nizami's *Khusraw va Shirin*, Khusraw's wife accuses women of deceitfulness and asserts that loyalty (*vafa*) can be found only in men.⁴⁷

Ordinarily, in Sa'di a woman is inferior to any man, unless he happens to be of truly low character, in which case even a dog is better than he is:

A woman is better far than a hurtful man,
A dog than people-afflicting people....⁴⁸

Sa'di's low regard for women leads to their casual disparagement even in the heterosexual love poems, where a member of their sex is idealized. Somewhat insensitively, in one poem Sa'di congratulates himself for his marvelous verses and facetiously calls for the revival of the pre-Islamic practice of the live burial of infant girls:

O Sa'di, your bright heart like mother-of-pearl
Turned every drop it drank into a gem.
Your sweet verses, these daughters of your poetic gift,
Have driven to ecstasy the discerning.
It is fitting, therefore, that those who beget daughters
In your time, should bury them alive.⁴⁹

This insensitivity is revealed also in Sa'di's anecdote about a Chinese slave girl who rejects the advances of a drunken king and who is punished by being delivered to a black slave who has his way with her. The woman's feelings and responses are not dwelled upon in the tale; they are not an issue at all.⁵⁰

Despite his low regard for women, Sa'di shows compassion for widows, old women, and mothers, and expresses admiration for devout women. About the mother he says:

The well-beloved mother's lap and bosom
Are paradise, her breasts a stream of milk therein;
A lofty tree she is, life nourishing,
The child a delicate fruit upon it;
Are not the bosom's veins one with the heart's interior?
Thus, if you consider well, milk is the heart's blood.⁵¹

Three anecdotes in the "Bustan" and one in the "Gulistan" exhort the young to respect the mother.⁵² Sa'di's high regard for mothers is shared by Tusi. A believer in woman's inferiority, Tusi nevertheless grants woman a high position as parent and makes filial obedience a virtue and filial disobedience a vice.⁵³

Sa'di's admiration for saintly women is revealed in the "Second Treatise," where a holy Muslim with many disciples acknowledges the superiority of a devout woman, saying, "I wish I were the dust under the feet of that veiled creature."⁵⁴ Elsewhere Sa'di states:

Women who bear devotion by free choice
Will outstrip men who lack for piety....⁵⁵

Thus, through devotion, women can outstrip men.

Of Wives and Woes

Sa'di's longest statement on wives occurs in a poem in a chapter of the "Bustan" entitled "Concerning the World of Edification."⁵⁶ The poem's opening lines describe the ideal wife as obedient, chaste, sympathetic, friendly, modest, and pleasantly spoken. "To beauty or ugliness have no regard:/A pleasant-mannered wife's more soothing than one fair," says the poet, choosing the ugly wife who has a good disposition over the "pari-countenanced, but ugly dispositioned" wife; for the former "Vinegar, from her husband's hand, she will take like sweetmeats...." Having listed the characteristics of the unsuitable wife, the poet offers these words of advice:

Beat the wife who's always on her way to market:
Or else, wifelike, you yourself may sit at home;
If a wife to her husband will not give ear,
Then place her collyrium-coloured drawers upon the man!

.....
...when the wife smiles in the face of a stranger,
Tell [her husband] to boast of his manhood no more!

.....
Let the eyes of a wife be blind to strangers:
When she leaves her house, let it be for the tomb;
When you see your wife not steadfast in one place,
No calm you'll find then from prudence or good judgment:
Flee from her hand to the crocodile's mouth--
Better to die than live in shame!
Cover her face from the stranger's eye,
But if she will not hear, then which is wife, which husband?

At the end of the poem even the "goodly wife," who in the opening lines is said "to turn a poor man to an emperor," becomes a liability:

A goodly wife, of pleasant nature, is a trouble and a
burden,
But utterly let go the ugly, ill-assorted one.

Sa'di then quotes two husbands "quite confounded at the hands of their wives":

Said one: "May none possess an evil wife!"
The other: "May no wives be in the world at all!"

To which Sa'di adds:

Take a new wife, friend, with every new spring,
For last year's calendar serves no purpose!

Sa'di's views regarding wives and the husband's sovereignty in marriage are supported by the Quran and reflected in books of counsel such as *Akhlag-i Nasiri*, *Akhlag-i Jalali* (fifteenth century),⁵⁷ and the *Qabusnamah*. The Quran instructs husbands to "Chide those [wives] whose refractoriness you have cause to fear. Remove them into sleeping chambers apart, and beat them. But if they are obedient to you, then seek no occasion against them."⁵⁸ Books of counsel concur in a practical approach to marriage, one

which attaches little importance to love and desire.
According to Tusi:

The motive for taking a wife should be twofold, the preservation of property and the quest of progeny; it should not be at the instigation of appetite or for any other purpose.⁵⁹

"Marry a woman of honorable family in order to have a lady in the house and not to indulge in sexual pleasure," suggests the *Qabusnamah*, for "to satisfy your desires you can buy slave girls in the bazaar, which involves neither so much expense nor so much trouble."⁶⁰

As for the ideal wife, Tusi's description is similar to Sa'di's:

The best of wives is the wife adorned with intelligence, piety, continence, shrewdness, modesty, tenderness, a loving disposition, control of her tongue, obedience to her husband, self-devotion in his service and a preference for his pleasure....⁶¹

Tusi believes that the husband's sovereignty over his wife is to be maintained at all cost. For example, if "afflicted with the trial of love for her, he should keep it concealed from her and so contrive that she never becomes aware thereof. Then, if he cannot contain himself, he must employ the remedies prescribed in the case of Love."⁶² The husband must rule his wife; otherwise, "the one who should command is commanded, the one who should obey is obeyed, and the regulator is regulated; and the end of such a state is the realization of shame and disgrace...."⁶³

To ensure her chastity, the husband "should restrain the wife from foolish pastimes, from looking at strangers, and from listening to tales about men....women should be prevented from learning the Joseph sura, inasmuch as listening to such narratives may cause them to deviate from the law of continence."⁶⁴ Other writers especially warn against exposing wives to *Vis va Ramin*, which tells of Vis's adulterous love. The *Qabusnamah* suggests that to keep wives from temptation the husband should allow no man to enter the women's quarters, except for old, ugly black eunuchs.⁶⁵

The segregation of men and women, the woman's lack of education, the belief in her moral and intellectual deficiency, and the premium placed on the husband's sovereignty in marriage contributed to the incompatibility of men and women in medieval Iran. The differences in their education and upbringing must have prevented men and women from being friends and companions and must have encouraged close bonds between men. Sexual segregation, the veil, and the close bond between men must have contributed to male homosexuality. In Sa'di's works men generally choose boys for love and other men for friendship and companionship. Romantic love between men and women is strikingly absent among the anecdotes of the "Gulistan" and "Bustan." The few stories on marriage speak of marital discord. Sa'di himself complains of his wife, who "turned out to be ill-humoured, quarrelsome, disobedient, abusive in her tongue and embittering my life"⁶⁶ Ironically, the only anecdote of marital love in the chapter "On Love and Youth" in the "Gulistan" turns out to be a mother-in-law joke! "The beautiful wife of a man died but her mother, a decrepit old hag, remained in the house on account of the dowry." Asked "how he bore the loss of his beloved," the husband replies, "It is not as painful not to see my wife as to see the mother of my wife."⁶⁷

In the "Gulistan" and "Bustan" most husbands view wives and children merely as a burden. Once the "active, graceful, smiling, sweet-tongued youth" gives hostage to fortune, "the root of [his] merriment [is]...cut and the roses of his countenance [wither]."⁶⁸

As for marital differences, in several anecdotes Sa'di seems pessimistic about their resolution. The abused spouse seeking advice from an elder is generally told "Your heart...on hardship set,/For none at such fortitude should be ashamed."⁶⁹

Whatever their faults, however, Sa'di's women are chaste. Incidence of the wife's adultery is quite rare. One brief anecdote on the subject, unaccountably placed in a chapter of the "Gulistan" entitled "On the Advantages of Silence," tells of an astrologer who, having entered his house discovers a stranger with his wife. "How knowest thou what is in the Zenith of the sky/If thou art not aware who is in thy house?"⁷⁰ comments a pious man upon learning of the incident.

Like Chaucer's old knight, January, several old men in Sa'di believe that "to take a wyf is a glorious thing," especially "whan a man is oold and hoor./ Thanne is a wyf the fruyt of his tresor."⁷¹ Such marriages work out as badly in Sa'di as they do in Chaucer. The sanction of polygamy made January-May marriages much more common in Sa'di's Iran than in Chaucer's monogamous England. Yet, Sa'di discourages such unions, warning that the husband's failure to satisfy his wife creates discord. In one anecdote, where the husband's age prevents him from consummating the marriage Sa'di sides with the young bride.⁷²

A woman who arises without satisfaction from a man,
Will raise many a quarrel and contention.
An old man who is unable to rise from his place,
Except by the aid of a stick, how can his own stick
rise?⁷³

Compared to Christianity and Judaism, divorces are easy to get in Islam. According to Tusi, a speedy divorce is the best solution to marital discord, "for the proximity of a bad wife is worse than that of wild beasts and serpents."⁷⁴ (Such must have been the advice Sa'di followed with regard to his shrewish wife.) Occasionally, however, the bride-price (*mahr*) the husband owed his wife stood in the way of his freedom. In an anecdote in the "Hazliyyat," a young man marries without having seen his bride's face. Finding her very ugly, he refuses to consummate the marriage and, unable to pay the *mahr*, pleads with his father-in-law to release him from that obligation. Being refused, the desperate groom takes revenge by seducing his wife's sister, brother, mother, nurse, and servant. Upon learning of these goings on, to prevent further evil, the father-in-law is only too happy to set the groom free.⁷⁵ It is possible that this anecdote is meant as a criticism of the custom which forbade the bride and groom to see each other until after the wedding ceremony. The episode's value as social criticism is, however, obscured by its deliberate coarseness and its extremely obscene language.

From Women to Boys

The deterioration of the Iranian woman's social status in Islamic Iran and the moral laxity encouraged by the open pederasty of the Turkish Ghaznavid, Seljuq, and Khwarazmshahian rulers promoted the love of boys in Iran, so that in much of medieval Iranian love lyrics women were supplanted by boys:

In the higher ranks of society women, whether wives or slaves, waited in the...women's quarters on their master's pleasure....[H]owever ready they might be to seek diversion elsewhere they could not hope to evade the close surveillance of the eunuchs. Their master had, therefore, no need to win their good graces or even to make himself agreeable to them. And as for women belonging to any other social class, whether artistes [i.e., singers and dancing girls] or courtesans, it was only necessary to pay them. Thus, deprived as they were of any freedom of action, women ceased to be the main object of amorous desire. Romantic passion was now inspired by those adolescent youths whose beauty and charm enlivened the male social gatherings.⁷⁶

Unsurprisingly, most Iranian medieval romances are about pre-Islamic legendary lovers and pre-Islamic times, when women enjoyed greater freedom and prestige.

As for the origin of homosexuality in Iran, the severe condemnation of it in the Avesta shows that it existed in ancient Iran and was not introduced with Hellenism, as Herodotus would have us believe.⁷⁷ In his essay on the "Sotadic Zone," Richard F. Burton claims that pederasty is "geographical and climatic not racial." He includes Iran in the geographic area where pederasty "is popular and endemic, held at the worst to be a mere peccadillo...."⁷⁸ Whatever the Iranian man's inclination toward boys, the veil and the Islamic restrictions placed on social intercourse between the sexes must have contributed to pederasty. Furthermore, the open pederasty of the Turkish rulers⁷⁹ who dominated Iran in the eleventh and twelfth century must have encouraged the love of boys and made it tolerable if not acceptable. The homosexual love of Sultan Mahmud for his slave Ayaz and that of Mahmud's son Mas'ud for Nushtagin are alluded to

frequently in the writings of the period without condemnation. Among the gifts these Turkish rulers showered on their court poets were beautiful slave girls and slave boys, the latter trained to serve as catamites. Affluent men bought slave boys while the less fortunate made do with less charming male prostitutes found in the seedy parts of town. Sa'di's works suggest that pederasty was common and generally tolerated.

As mentioned earlier, in most love poems of Sa'di the beloved's gender is not specified, though in some the loved one is addressed as *pisar*, *ghulam*, *kudak*, and *shahid*, terms which identify the love object as a boy or youth. Line four of a *ghazal* in the "Tayyibat" identifies the beloved as a boy more dazzling than the sun and lovelier than any flower, his erect figure dwarfing the cypress.⁸⁰ In the opening line of another love poem in the "Badayi'" Sa'di calls the beloved a "heart-robbing boy" and depicts himself as a captive in love, a prisoner of the boy's beauty. The loved-one is ruthless, but neither sword nor arrow disheartens his host of admirers who will gladly give up life itself in his quest.⁸¹ In Sa'di the love of boys is crude and lustful in the pornographic works, passionate and romantic in the secular lyric poems, and Platonic in the mystical love lyrics. Thus, Sa'di's works present the many facets of the love of boys in life and literature.

The mystical dimension of the love of boys is suggested by the many benefits associated with the contemplation of the beautiful face (*ruy-i niku*). The *Nawruznamah* (The Book of the New Year's Day), by 'Umar Khayyam (d. 1123), lists these benefits and sums up the accepted views on the subject. The chapter entitled "Discourse on the Merits of the Beautiful Face" lists four benefits derived from the contemplation of the beautiful face:

First, it makes the day auspicious; second, it adds pleasure to life; third, it inspires generosity and compassion; fourth, it augments [one's] wealth and position....⁸²

The anecdotes illustrating these points are about beautiful females as well as males, but the one most emphasized is about Sultan Mahmud and a beautiful boy whom the sultan wanted constantly before him. "And through the auspicious-

ness of his face, Mahmud achieved great deeds and victories, and conquered many provinces in India and many cities in Khurasan and became king."⁸³

These ideas are reflected in Sa'di's remarks about the *shahid*, or beautiful boy, "with whom the souls of pious men are inclined to commingle because it has been said that a little beauty is better than much wealth. An attractive face is said to be a salve to despondent hearts and the key to locked doors, wherefore the society of such a person is everywhere known to be very acceptable."⁸⁴

The four worldly benefits derived from the contemplation of the beautiful face are dwarfed by the transcendental benefits of the same exercise, believed to lead to the appreciation of a higher truth: "Some say that the beautiful face is the sign (*ayat*) of God, which offers the truth to the inquirers of truth, so that through it they may return to God."⁸⁵ This notion, the general basis in Platonism, Pantheism, metempsychosis, and Sufism, is the belief that the contemplation of beauty in its physical form can lead to the appreciation of beauty in the abstract and ultimately to union with the Divine Being. As Khayyam states:

Some call [the beautiful face] the domain of love; others, the field of happiness, the garden of affection, the ornament of creation, and the sign of paradise. Philosophers consider it the reason for God's creation and for our quest to learn about God. [The beautiful face] guides us to apprehend the Creator's goodness. According to Pantheists (*Tabi'iyān*)...it represents balance...while metempsychosists consider it to be God's reward to his creature for purity and virtuousness in [previous life times]....And some say that the beautiful face is the sign of God, which offers the truth to seekers of truth, so that through it they may return to God.⁸⁶

In sufism, love for the beautiful youth (*shahid*) aids the Sufi to purge his love from all sensual elements and to achieve union with God through the extinction of the self. Such notions lent legitimacy to the love of boys, though there were skeptics who dismissed these ideas as an excuse for pederasty. In the words of Sa'di in the "Bustan":

A certain class are wont to sit with pleasant boys,
Claiming to be pure-dealers, men of insight;
Take it from me, worn out by many days:
The fasting man at tables eats regrets:
The sheep eats date-stones, but only because
Locks and bonds lie on the date-bales....⁸⁷

*The Love Chapters in the "Gulistan"
and "Bustan"*

Chapter Five of the "Gulistan," entitled "On Love and Youth," and Chapter Three of the "Bustan," called "On Love, Intoxication, and Delirium," provide examples of homosexual, heterosexual, and mystical love. On the whole the "Gulistan" chapter is worldly and homosexual while the "Bustan" chapter is mystical and spiritual, revealing a maturer, more serious Sa'di.

Of the 21 anecdotes in the "Gulistan" chapter on love, two (nos. 15, 19) are heterosexual, and two (nos. 12, 16) can be heterosexual or homosexual.⁸⁸ Another three (nos. 6, 8, 14) treat of friendship, perhaps with some homosexual overtones in numbers 6 and 8. One (no. 4) is homosexual and mystical, and twelve (nos. 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 17, 18, 20, 21) are homosexual. Number 13, about compatibility, is applicable to love as well as friendship between men.

Heterosexual love does not figure prominently in the chapter "On Love and Youth." The two heterosexual anecdotes are brief: number 15 is about the legendary lover Majnun; and number 19, already mentioned, is about a widower more distressed about the presence of his mother-in-law than saddened by the loss of his wife. Of the two anecdotes that can be homosexual or heterosexual number 12 is about wagging tongues, and number 16 on Sa'di's encounter with a beauty of unidentified sex on a summer's day. Numbers 6, 8, and 14 appear to be autobiographical, dealing with intimate friendship between men. Number 4 illustrates the Sufi notion that the love of a beautiful youth can lead to mystical union with God. The lover is a poor man, the beloved a prince. When the prince finally learns of the lover's secret and goes to see him, the lover is so moved that "he uttered a shout and surrendered his life."⁸⁹ Of the twelve homosexual anecdotes number 1 is about Sultan

Mahmud and Ayaz and number 2 on the homosexual desire of a teacher for a male student. In numbers 3 and 9 the lovers are an ascetic and a learned man respectively, in love with youths. In number 11, Sa'di disparages the catamite:

When the beardless youth [*amrad*] is beautiful and sweet
His speech is bitter, his temper hasty.
When his beard grows and he attains puberty
He associates with men and seeks affection.⁹⁰

Number 20, one of the longer episodes of the "Gulistan," is about the love of a judge for a farrier boy,⁹¹ and number 21 deals with the unselfish devotion of two youths to each other.

The three remaining homosexual anecdotes (nos. 10, 17, 18) are perhaps autobiographic. In number 10 Sa'di speaks of "closest terms of intimacy" between himself and a youth "who had a melodious voice and a form beautiful like the moon just rising."⁹² In number 17, the poet recalls a flirtation with "a graceful boy," a student in the main mosque of Kashghar. In number 18, Sa'di recalls his despair at the loss of a youth whose "beauty was the Qiblah of my eye and the chief joy of my life union with him." When the youth dies, Sa'di "resolved and firmly determined to fold up the carpet of pleasure during the rest of my life and to retire from mixing in society."⁹³

Love in the third chapter of the "Bustan" is predominantly mystical. Much profounder than the chapter it parallels in the "Gulistan," "On Love, Intoxication, and Delirium" includes a prologue and twenty anecdotes. Of the three heterosexual anecdotes, number 49 and 52 are on marital discord, and number 53 on the legendary lover Majnun.⁹⁴ Only in one anecdote (no. 50), about the love aroused in his patients by a handsome physician, is love merely homosexual with no mystical overtones. Numbers 56 and 58 are not relevant to the chapter's theme, and numbers 47, 48, and 57 are not mystical and offer an orthodox treatment of the love of God. Of the rest, in numbers 45, 51, 55, 60, 61, and 62, love is purely mystical, perceived without the intermediariship of a beautiful youth (*shahid*). Possessing very slight narrative element, these anecdotes describe the various stages of the mystical experience. Numbers 43, 44, 46, 54, and 59, on the other hand, illustrate the manner in which the love of a youth can guide the lover to transcend

the self and to achieve union with God. In these anecdotes Sa'di is at his best, making complex mystical ideas accessible to the reader.⁹⁵ Typically, the beloved is haughty and hostile; the lover, humble, driven by love. The lover's self-extinction symbolizes his transcendence of this world.

If a man of love you'd be, make yourself of slight account:
If otherwise, then take the road of safety!
Fear not that the Lover will turn you to dust,
For if he destroys you, you'll be everlasting.
No plant grows rightly from the seed
Unless its state first altered be.⁹⁶

In the homosexual/mystical anecdotes of the "Bustan," the love of the *shahid* is only a springboard to a higher experience and itself is never consummated. The emphasis on homosexual love--mystical or profane--in the love chapters of the "Gulistan" and "Bustan" accounts for the insignificant role of women in the bulk of the anecdotes.

The Social Acceptability of the Love of Boys

Some medieval sources treat pederasty as a normal and acceptable practice, while others condemn it as being immoral and depraved. Sa'di himself reflects this ambivalence. In a *ghazal* in the "Badayi'" he sounds proud of his reputation as a lover of boys:

Sa'di's fame has spread everywhere for his love of
boys (*shahidbazi*);
In this there is no blame among us but rather praise.⁹⁷

In the chapter "On the World of Edification" in the "Bustan," however, he severely attacks pederasts as well as the object of their love, the beautiful *shahid*. Many of his lyric poems celebrate the love of boys, though some of his works, for example the anecdote of "The pious man who jested with a child," reflect society's disapproval of the love of boys.⁹⁸ In the "Bustan" Sa'di counsels men in high position to refrain from the love of youths and not risk the loss of dignity: "If you'd have your worth remain high,/Set not your heart, my master, on smooth-faced ones!"⁹⁹ An avowed lover of boys, in his chapter of the "Bustan" entitled "On the

World of Edification" Sa'di launches a bitter attack against the haughty, ungrateful youth, warning that "the house-uprooting...[*shahid*] will make a desolation for you":

Though you may kiss his feet, he'll give you no regard:
Though you be dust before him, no gratitude he will show you.
Empty your head of brains, of coins your hands,
If you would set your mind on other people's children:
On other people's children look not to evil purpose,
Lest your own child thereby comes to corruption.¹⁰⁰

In the love poems Sa'di welcomes the *Shahid*'s cruelty and offers to sacrifice life and fortune to please the boy, but in the above-mentioned chapter of the "Bustan" he criticizes the arrogant youth and advises the lover to "Go, cause your house to flourish with a wife."¹⁰¹ The arrogance of the *shahid* is also criticized in the "Gulistan."¹⁰²

The Persian language reflects the same ambivalence toward the love of boys. The *Lughatnamah* (Encyclopedic Dictionary) defines *shahid* as (1) a man who has a beautiful face, a youth, a youth whose beard has just sprouted, and (2) the beloved, a beautiful woman or youth.¹⁰³ Both in its literal and figurative sense the term's connotations are positive and tend to emphasize the physical beauty of the youth, not his role in the homosexual act. Social disapproval of pederasty is reflected in derogatory terms like *amrad* and *mukhannas* (catamite).¹⁰⁴ *Amrad* (beardless) also means effeminate and passive (*maf'ul*, the done). The term's other definitions (stupid, crafty, cowardly, spiritless, ignoble, infamous, disgraced) also suggest social disapproval of the catamite. The catamite is the object of much more severe disapproval than the sodomite (*fa'il*, the doer). Iranian medieval writings reveal a strong stigma against the passive homosexual. The boy one loved passionately was the *shahid*, but the boy one sodomized was the *mukhannas* or *amrad*. Sa'di used terms such as boy, youth, and *shahid* in his lyric poetry, and *amrad* and *mukhannas* in the "Hazliyyat" and the more down-to-earth portions of the "Gulistan." This contempt for the passive homosexual is perhaps due in part to the similarity in the sexual act between his function and that of the woman. To the catamite men transfer their low regard for woman.

The pornographic writings of Sa'di abound with derogatory remarks about the *mukhannas*, and even the "Gulistan" includes several invectives against him. In one anecdote Sa'di states that to describe the *mukhannas* "would be an abandonment of good manners, especially in the presence of great men." He casually suggests that "If a Tartar slays [the *mukhannas*]/The Tartar must not be slain in return./How long will he be like the bridge of Baghdad/With water flowing beneath and men on the back?" complains the poet, having crossed that bridge many a time himself.¹⁰⁵

Although found less objectionable than the catamite, the active homosexual was not free from blame, as obscene terms or curse words such as *kunparast*, *amradbaz*, *ghulam-barah* (sodomite or pederast) suggest.

Both Zoroastrianism and Islam condemned homosexuality. The Avesta forbade homosexual acts and a commentary of it authorized any passerby to kill the homosexual caught in the act.¹⁰⁷ More lenient than the Avesta, the Quran also prohibits lesbian and homosexual acts and appoints punishment for the guilty.¹⁰⁸ In the story of Lot, the Quran condemns sodomy in the strongest terms.¹⁰⁹

In *Akhlag-i Nasiri*, moralist Nasir al-Din Tusi counts the "appetite for pederasty" as a symptom of "the depravity of the faculty [of attraction]," one of the soul's three faculties.¹¹⁰ To suppress effeminacy in boys, Tusi recommends a spartan upbringing and prohibits anything that might encourage effeminate conduct. "His hair should not be arranged, nor should he be decked in the garments of women. Let him be given no ring until the time of necessity arrives." Tusi also advises against effeminacy in movement and gesture: "One should not...move the shoulders in the manner of women and effeminate men. The dangling and movements of the hands are also to be guarded against...."¹¹¹ Further to guard the boy's purity, Tusi advises parents to forbid him to read poetry about love or wine or to be present in the gathering of wine drinkers.¹¹² Tusi's concerns show that in thirteenth-century Iranian society the prevalence of pederasty caused parental anxiety. The works of Sa'di offer several examples of such concern. In the "Bustan," the father of a handsome boy shaves his son's head to discourage his admirers. In the chapter "On the World of Edification," which includes most of Sa'di's criticism of

this position. In the chapter "On Romantic Passion" the author assumes that the object of his son's love can be male or female. He advises his son against romantic love not on moral grounds, but because "a lover's life is beset with unhappiness...." Early in the chapter the author indicates that the object of romantic love can be male or female (*ma'shug*, or *ma'shugah*). Although in some parts of the chapter it is not clear whether the passion discussed is homosexual or heterosexual, there are places which distinctly speak of a man in love with a youth:

If...there is someone of whom you are passionately fond, let it be a person worthy of love; although the object of one's affection cannot always be a Ptolemy or Plato, he should have some endowment of good sense. Although I know, too, that not everyone can be Joseph son of Jacob, yet there must be in him some pleasing quality which shall prevent men from cavilling and allow indulgence to be readily accorded to you....¹¹⁶

Elsewhere, the author advises his son that if he takes his male friend to a party, he should not appear preoccupied with him. Apparently, in the author's circle a man was allowed to take his favorite youth to a party, but public display of affection was a breach of decorum.¹¹⁷

In "On Taking One's Pleasure," which follows the chapter on romantic love, the author directs his son in the regulation of his sex life:

As between women and youths, do not confine your inclinations to either sex; thus you may find enjoyment from both kinds without either of the two becoming inimical to you.¹¹⁸

In this chapter the regulation of one's sexual appetite is guided in part by current opinions about health. Just as "excessive copulation is harmful, [complete] abstinence also has its dangers." In the spring, when "the blood in the veins increases together with semen in the loins...the need for intercourse and relief becomes urgent in every man..." This relief can be attained through intercourse with boys or women, although, again for health reasons, the author advises his son to "let [his] desire

incline towards youths [during the summer] and during the winter towards women."¹¹⁹ The love of boys in the *Qabus-namah* is devoid of any Platonic or mystical significance. For the author, bisexuality seems to be the norm, any man being equally inclined toward women and boys.

A similar attitude is shown in a tale in Sa'di's "Gulistan." A king invites an ascetic to stay in his palace and, among other means of comfort, sends him a slave boy and a slave girl. The ascetic finds the two beauties equally desirable and apparently enjoys them both. The fact that the king includes a slave of each sex and the casual tone with which Sa'di tells the story indicate that bisexuality was common.¹²⁰

While Iranian medieval texts attest to the prevalence of homosexuality they avoid lesbianism.¹²¹ This writer does not recall a single lesbian episode in medieval Iranian writings, literary or otherwise. The absence of lesbianism in literature, however, is not proof of its absence in life. Sexual segregation encourages lesbianism among girls and unmarried women. Similarly, polygamy encourages lesbianism in the harem, where several wives are forced to share one husband. Lesbianism is perhaps also encouraged in a society where many men show a predilection for boys.

We do not know whether Iranians tolerated lesbianism as they did pederasty. Whether coy or indifferent, male poets and writers kept silent about lesbian practices. There is no instance of lesbianism in Sa'di, not even in the pornographic writings. Yet, the European traveler Sir John Chardin, who visited Iran in the seventeenth century, claims that the "lesbian vice" flourished in the harems of the East:

The women of the East...have ever been said to be given to the Lesbian vice. I have heard it said so often, and by so many people, that this is so, and that they have means of mutually contending their passions, that I hold it for very certain. They are prevented, so far as may be, from these practices, for it is said that they diminish their charms and render them less receptive to the passion of men....¹²²

The prevalence of lesbianism in the harem is confirmed also by Richard Burton, who traveled in the Middle East and North Africa in the second half of the nineteenth century:

Wealthy harems...are hot-beds of Sapphism and tribadism. Every woman past her first youth has a girl whom she calls her "Myrtle" (in Damascus). At Agbome, capital of Dahome, I found that a troop of women was kept for the use of the "Amazons" (Mission to Gelele, ii, 73). Amongst the wild Arabs, who ignore Socratic and Sapphic perversions, the lover is always more jealous of his beloved's girl-friends than of men rivals.¹²³

The *Arabian Nights* tale that elicits Burton's comment is about a lover who suspects his sweetheart of the lesbian vice when he finds the maid kissing her.¹²⁴

It stands to reason that in a sexually segregated society, where unmarried men and women had little opportunity to meet, some women would be driven to lesbianism. From a practical point, it was much safer and simpler to have a lesbian relation than to risk meeting a man. Not unlike the modern women's prison, the harem could encourage lesbianism among women deprived of male company.

Perhaps Islamic Iran is silent about lesbianism because it did not have a Sappho to celebrate lesbian love. As for male writers, most seem unwilling to speak of woman's unchastity and perhaps this accounts for the absence of lesbians and the dearth of adulterous women in the romantic literature of medieval Iran. The generally chaste women in Iranian courtly romances sharply contrast the bevy of adulterous royal wives in the courtly literature of medieval Europe inspired by *amour courtois* or courtly love.¹²⁵ In Nizami's *Khusraw va Shirin*, for example, though passionately in love, the heroine resists her beloved's advances until he consents to marry her. As for the adulterous heroine of the eleventh-century *Vis va Ramin*¹²⁶ and the unfaithful wives of the *Tutinamah*,¹²⁷ one should remember that the former was a pre-Islamic romance retold and the latter a collection of tales based on an Indian original. Whatever the status of the Iranian woman's virtue in life, in literature she is generally chaste and innocent of extramarital or lesbian sex. Male writers, among them Sa'di,

shied away from mentioning lesbianism; and women writers, who until the 1960s merely imitated literary trends set by men, did not break the tradition.

In his introduction to his book of Persian erotica Robert Surieu states:

The vicissitudes of their existence built up in the people of Iran a deep insight into the relativity of things, so that they not only yearned for the ineffable satisfactions of the life beyond but were eager to enjoy to the full the delights offered by the passing moment.¹²⁸

This remark is certainly true of Sa'di, whose mystical poems express a yearning for the beyond, and whose secular works reveal a desire for the joys of the moment. It is regrettable that this worldly-wise man of experience tells us so little about the women of his time.

NOTES

1. *Kulliyat-i Sa'di*, ed. Muhammad 'Ali Furughi (Tehran: Javidan, n.d.).
2. All references to "Khubsiiyyat va majalis al-hazl" are to an early edition of the *Kulliyat* at the Butler Library of Columbia University (call number 892.8 Sal, I 33), pp. 340-56. "Khabisat" (pl. of *Khabisah*, meaning an evil and impure thing), and "Khubsiiyyat" (from *khubs*, meaning adultery, pederasty, unlawful sex) appear as variants in the title, the first in English and the second in Persian scholarship.
3. Stylistically the "Hazliyyat" is not unlike Sa'di's down-to-earth writings in the "Gulistan." Furthermore, it exists in early manuscripts, for example in a *Kulliyat* made 35 years after Sa'di's death. There is therefore no reason to think the "Hazliyyat" spurious. See Ahmad Javid, "Yik nuskhah-yi kuhan as Kulliyat-i Sa'di," *Maqalati darbarah-yi zindigi va shi'r-i Sa'di*, ed. Mansur Rastigarnizhad, *Shawra-yi Intisharat-i Dan-ishgah-i Pahlavi*, no. 47 (Shiraz, 1350/1962), p. 48.

4. Cited by J. Rypka, "Poets and Prose Writers of the Late Saljuq and Mongol Periods," *The Cambridge History of Iran* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968), V, 600.
5. On Sa'di's travels and long life see Rahimzadah Safavi, *Sarguzasht-i sih akhtar-i tabnak-i Iran: Sa'di, Hafiz, Ibn-i Sina* (Tehran: 'Ilmi, 1335/1957), pp. 17-20, 10-12; and Abbas Iqbal, "Zaman-i tavallud va ava'il-i zindigi-yi Sa'di," *Maktab-i Sa'di*, ed. Kishavarz Sadr (Tehran: Kavyan, 1338/1960), pp. 52-71.
6. On Sa'di's teachers see Furughi's introduction to the *Kulliyat*, p. v. Sa'di mentions Ibn Jawzi in the "Gulistan," *Kulliyat*, pp. 117-18; trans. Edward Rehatsek, *The Gulistan or Rose Garden of Sa'di* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1964), pp. 125-27. At their best, English translations of Sa'di cited in this paper convey only his meaning and conceal his art. On the translation of the "Gulistan" into foreign languages see Iraj Afshar, "Bahsi muqaddamati darbab-i tarh-i kitab-shinasi-yi Sa'di va Hafiz," *Maqalati darbarah-yi Zindigi va shi'r-i Sa'di*, p. 12.
7. See the *Kulliyat*, pp. 61, 86, 92, 112, 113, 123, 138, 139, 140, 141, 167, 188, 333, 378, 395, 396. Furughi doubts that Sa'di traveled to so many places (*Kulliyat*, p. iv). Edward G. Browne, however, credits Sa'di with visits to "Balkh, Ghazna, the Panjab, Somnath, Gujerat, Yemen, the Hijaz and other parts of Arabia, Abyssinia, Syria, especially Damascus, and Baalbekk...North Africa, and Asia Minor." See *A Literary History of Persia* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1956), II, 529.
8. On the credibility of the Somnath episode see Qazi Ahmad Mian Akhtar, "Sa'di's Visit to Somnath," *Studies: Islamic and Oriental* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1945), pp. 21-36. According to Th. Emil Homerin this episode "may be seen as a piece of creative fiction following *maqamah* canons." See his "Sa'di's Somnatiyah," *Iranian Studies*, XVI, Nos. 1-2 (Winter-Spring, 1983), pp. 31-50.
9. 'Ali Dashti, *Qalamruv-i Sa'di* (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 2536/1977), pp. 186-87, 236-37.

10. "Gulistan," *Kulliyat*, p. 87, trans. Rehatsek, p. 85.
11. For instances of prejudice against blacks see the "Gulistan," *Kulliyat*, pp. 106-7, trans. Rehatsek, pp. 111-12; and the "Bustan," *Kulliyat*, pp. 354-55, trans. G. M. Wickens, *Morals Pointed and Tales Adorned* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), ll. 3037-60. See also Minoo S. Southgate, "Negative Images of Blacks in Some Medieval Iranian Writings," *Iranian Studies*, XVIII, No. 1 (Winter 1984), pp. 13, 17, 24-25. For prejudice against Jews see the "Gulistan," *Kulliyat*, pp. 141, 144, 155; trans. Rehatsek, pp. 159, 164, 178.
12. *Cambridge History of Iran*, V, 600.
13. 'Ali Dashti, p. 232. See also Muhammad Ja'far Mahjub, "Guftugu'i kutah darbarah-yi zaban-i Sa'di va payvand-i an ba zindigi," *Maqalati darbarah-yi zindigi va shi'r-i Sa'di*, pp. 344-45.
14. R. Safavi, *Sarguzasht-i sih akhtar...*, p. 16.
15. On bowlderized English translations of the "Gulistan" see W. G. Archer's "Preface" to Rehatsek's translation, pp. 15-28. See also the *Arabian Nights*, trans. Richard F. Burton (Privately Printed for the Burton Club, n.d.), V, 156, n. 2.
16. Robert Surieu, *Sarve Naz*, trans. James Hogarth (Geneva: Nagel Publishers, 1967), p. 7.
17. *Kulliyat*, p. 620.
18. Robert Surieu, p. 133.
19. An anecdote in the "Bustan," *Kulliyat*, pp. 354-55, trans. Wickens, ll. 3037-60, tells of the sexual passion of a white woman for a black man, stressing the inappropriateness of such passion and the moral, "Let embracing lovers alone!"
20. "Hazliyyat," pp. 344, 345, and 348. Satirist 'Ubayd Zakani (d. 1379) also preferred boys to women and sodomy to intercourse. See his "Hundred Precepts,"

Kulliyat-i 'Ubayd Zakani, ed. Iqbal Ashtiyani (Tehran: Sharq, 1332/1959), pp. 43-48, and an autobiographic poem, "Masnaviyyat," p. 51. According to Richard Burton (*Arabian Nights*, X, 204), marital pederasty was a problem in Iran as late as the thirteenth century: "We can hardly wonder at the loose conduct of Persian women perpetually mortified by marital pederasty." See also "The Man's Dispute with the Learned Woman Concerning the Relative Excellence of Male and Female," in the 419th Night, *Arabian Nights*, V, 154-63.

In her study of Sohar, in Oman, anthropologist Unni Wikan discusses the *xanith* (homosexual male prostitute) as a person regarded by Soharis "as neither man nor woman...but having a truly distinct, third gender role." The *xanith* primarily serves heterosexual single men. Wikan hypothesizes that the Soharis condone male homosexual prostitution because they consider it a lesser evil than female prostitution:

...It would be difficult to maintain a conception of women as simultaneously pure and sexually active, if some among them were publicly acknowledged also to serve as prostitutes. If the public view, however, is that prostitution is an act of *xaniths*, whereas women are not associated with the moral decay that prostitution represents, then women may be conceptualized as pure and virtuous in their sexual role.

See *Behind the Veil in Arabia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1982), pp. 168, 178.

21. See 'Ali Akbar Dihkhuda, *Amsal va hikam* (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1339/1960), s.v. *zanan*, *mard*, *al-nisa'*, and *haba'il al-shaytan*; and Thomas Patrick Hughes, *A Dictionary of Islam* (Clifton, N.J.: Reference Book Publishers, 1965), s.v. *wives and women*.
22. The Quran, iv, 34, quoted in Charis Waddy, *Woman in Muslim History* (London: Longman, 1980), p. 30.
23. Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali, ed. and trans., *The Holy Quran: Text, Translation and Commentary* (Washington, D.C.: The Islamic Center, 1978), xii, 28.

24. Dihkhuda, *Amsal va hikam*, p. 279.
25. Quoted by Jalal Khaliqi Mutlaq, "Gardishi dar Garshasp-namah," *Iran namah*, Vol. II, No. 1 (Autumn 1983), p. 122. See pp. 120-27 for a collection of Asadi's "negative and harsh" statements about women.
26. *Khusraw va Shirin*, ed. Vahid Dastgirdi (Tehran: Ibn-i Sina, 1333/1954), pp. 197, 346. See also *Laila va Majnun*, ed. Vahid Dastgirdi (Tehran: Ibn-i Sina, 1333/1954, p. 144; trans. James Atkinson, *Laila and Majnun* (London: Valpy, 1836), ll. 1447-62.
27. Dihkhuda, *Amsal va hikam*, p. 919.
28. Ed. Mujtaba Minuvi and 'Aliriza Haydari (Tehran: Khwarazmi, 1356/1978), pp. 216, 218; trans. G. M. Wickens, *The Nasirean Ethics* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1964), pp. 162, 163. Emphasis added. See also 'Imad ibn Muhammad al-Na'ri, *Tutinamah: jawahir al-asmār, Intisharat-i Farhang-i Iran* (Tehran: 1352/1974), p. 26.
29. Dihkhuda, *Amsal va hikam*, p. 919.
30. *Shahnamah* (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1341/1953), p. 123. This line does not appear in the *Shahnamah-yi Firdawsi*, ed. E. Bertels (Moscow, 1962), III, p. 34, l. 438.
31. The *Shahnamah*, ed. Bertels, I, p. 160, gives this line in the footnotes rather than the text. In the Amir Kabir edition the line occurs in the text, p. 52. Some male characters in the *Shahnamah* express similar views on women. It is better for a great man to be dead than to be influenced by a woman, says Rustam, blessing only the woman not yet born of a mother! Women are strangers to wisdom, says Siyavush. See the *Shahnamah-yi Firdawsi*, ed. Bertels, III, p. 171, ll. 2618-19 and p. 15, l. 165.
32. *Vis va Ramin*, ed. Muhammad Ja'far Mahjub (Tehran: Ibn-i Sina, 1337/1959), pp. 97-98; trans. George Morrison, *Vis and Ramin* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), p. 90.

33. (Tehran: Sharq, 1928). All quotations are from pages 54-57; translated in A. J. Arberry, *Fitzgerald's Salaman and Absal* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1956), pp. 160-61.
34. "Hippolytus," in *Euripides I*, trans. Richmond Lattimore et al. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1955), ll. 619-24. On the same theme, Firdawsi suggests that having acquired a proper child, a man should forswear the love of woman. See *The Shahnamah-yi Firdawsi*, ed. Bertels, III, p. 39, l. 567.
35. In his view that the child is created from man's sperm alone, Jami agrees with Aristotle. See Edgar Gregersen, *Sexual Practices* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1983), p. 34. Apparently Jami was ignorant of Al-Ghazali's opinion in *Ihya' 'ulum al-din* (Revivification of Religious Sciences) that "The child is not created from the man's sperm alone, but from the union of a sperm from the male with a sperm from the female...and in any case the sperm from the female is a determinant factor in the process of coagulation." Translated in Fatima Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1975), p. 8.
36. On Islam's "fear [of] the power of female sexual attraction over men" see Fatima Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil*, pp. 1-28. Mernissi's analysis of Imam al-Ghazali's views on sexuality is especially noteworthy. For al-Ghazali's opinion see his *Ihya' 'ulum al-din* (Qairo: al-Halabi, 1967), II, 27-53; III, 126-35.
37. Amir 'Unsur al-Ma'ali Kaykavus ibn Iskandar, *Qabusnamah*, ed. Sa'id Nafisi (Tehran: Furughi, 1342/1964), p. 98; trans. Reuben Levy, *A Mirror for Princes: The Qabus Nama* (London: Cresset, 1951), p. 125. For aphorisms and proverbs on women and marriage see Dihkhuda, *Amsal va hikam*, pp. 920-21.
38. *Qabusnamah*, p. 98; trans. Levy, p. 125.
39. *Akhlaq-i Nasiri*, pp. 229-30; trans. Wickens, p. 173. Thirteenth-century poet Awhadi warns that teaching women to read and write will augment their capacity for evil. See Dihkhuda, *Amsal va Hikam*, p. 921.

40. Dihkhuda, *Amsal va hikam*, p. 919.
41. *Kulliyat*, p. 24. Many writers place women and children in a single category below men. The author of the *Qabusnamah*, for example, advises his son to "quarrel with nobody; quarreling is not indulged in by men of dignity; but rather by women and little children (p. 55; trans. Levy, p. 69). Similarly, a chapter in the *Akhlaq-i Nasiri* (p. 231) teaching men the correct way to address others advises them to be "cautious in addressing common people, children, women, madmen, and drunken persons," trans. Wickens, p. 174.
42. *Akhlaq-i Nasiri*, p. 169, trans. Wickens, p. 123.
43. "Gulistan," *Kulliyat*, p. 79; trans. Rehatsek, p. 76. For similar remarks on woman's cowardice and man's bravery see the "Bustan," *Kulliyat*, pp. 265, 266; trans. Wickens, ll. 1085, 1087, 1096.
44. "Bustan," *Kulliyat*, p. 283, trans. Wickens, ll. 1482-83.
45. "Gulistan," *Kulliyat*, pp. 209, 204; trans. Southgate.
46. Faramarz al-Arjani, *Samak-i 'Ayyar*, ed. Parviz Natal Khanlari. *Bunyad-i Farhang-i Iran*, No. 52 (Tehran: 1347/1969), I, 47.
47. Pp. 196-97.
48. "Bustan," *Kulliyat*, p. 257; trans. Wickens, l. 887.
49. "Tayyibat," *Kulliyat*, p. 583.
50. "Gulistan," *Kulliyat*, pp. 106-7; trans. Rehatsek, pp. 111-13.
51. "Bustan," *Kulliyat*, p. 371; trans. Wickens, ll. 3407-9.
52. *Ibid.*, pp. 371-72; trans. ll. 3414-41, and "Gulistan," *Kulliyat*, pp. 177, 178; trans. 209, 210.
53. *Akhlaq-i Nasiri*, pp. 237-38; trans. Wickens, pp. 178-79.

54. *Kulliyat*, p. 31.
55. "Bustan," *Kulliyat*, p. 390; trans. Wickens, l. 3856.
56. *Ibid.*, pp. 361-62, trans. ll. 3187-3220.
57. Jalal al-Din Muhammad al-Diwani (L.k.h.n.v. [1957]), pp. 192ff., trans. W. F. Thompson, *Practical Philosophy of the Muhammedan People* (Karachi: Karimsons, 1977), pp. 262-74.
58. *The Quran*, iv, 34; quoted in *A Dictionary of Islam*, p. 671.
59. *Akhlaq-i Nasiri*, p. 215; trans. Wickens, p. 161.
60. P. 93; trans. Levy, p. 118.
61. *Akhlaq-i Nasiri*, pp. 215-16; trans. Wickens, p. 161. See also the *Qabusnamah*, pp. 129-30; trans. Levy, p. 117.
62. *Akhlaq-i Nasiri*, p. 219; trans. Wickens, p. 164. The *Qabusnamah* gives the husband similar advice, adding, "even though you may be infatuated with her do not spend every night in her society," p. 94; trans. Levy, p. 119.
63. *Akhlaq-i Nasiri*, p. 217; trans. Wickens, p. 162.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 219; trans. 164.
65. *Ibid.*, pp. 80, 94; trans. pp. 108, 119.
66. "Gulistan," *Kulliyat*, p. 123; trans. Rehatsek, p. 134.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 166; trans. p. 193.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 178; trans. p. 209. For other examples see pp. 90-91 and 124 in the original and pp. 90-92 and 135 in the translation.
69. "Bustan," *Kulliyat*, p. 362; trans. Wickens, ll. 3221-26. See also pp. 299 and 300 in the original and ll. 1827-38 and 1852-62 in the translation.

70. "Gulistan," *Kulliyat*, p. 156; trans. Rehatsek, p. 179.
71. *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. F. N. Robinson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), IV (E), ll. 1268-70.
72. "Gulistan," *Kulliyat*, pp. 179; trans. Rehatsek, p. 211.
73. *Ibid.*, p. 176; trans. p. 207.
74. *Akhlag-i Nasiri*, pp. 220-21; trans. Wickens, p. 165.
75. "Hazliyyat," pp. 341-42.
76. Robert Surieu, *Sarve Naz*, p. 172. For a description of the Safavid harem see Chardin, *Voyages du Chevalier Chardin en Perse* (Paris: Le Norman, Imprimeur-Libraire, 1811), VI, 6-32.
77. Surieu, p. 16.
78. "Terminal Essay," *Arabian Nights*, X, 180, 179; I, 211.
79. Zabihullah Safa, *Tarikh-i adabiyyat dar Iran* (Tehran: Ibn-i Sina, 1339/1961), II, 69-77; 121-24.
80. *Kulliyat*, pp. 583-84.
81. *Kulliyat*, p. 749.
82. Ed. Muhtaba Minuvi (Tehran: Kavah, n.d.), pp. 71-72. See also Robert Surieu, pp. 85ff.
83. *Nawruznamah*, p. 76.
84. "Gulistan," *Kulliyat*, p. 146; trans. Rehatsek, p. 166.
85. *Nawruznamah*, p. 73. See Plato's "Symposium," in *The Dialogues of Plato*, ed. and trans. B. Jowett (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), I, 478-555.
86. *Nawruznamah*, pp. 72-73.
87. "Bustan," *Kulliyat*, p. 365; trans. Wickens, ll. 3283-85.

88. These numbers refer to the Rehatsek translation of the "Gulistan." The anecdotes are not numbered in the Furughi edition, but if numbered 1 through 21 they will correspond to the English.
89. "Gulistan," *Kulliyat*, p. 160; trans. Rehatsek, p. 185.
90. *Ibid.*, p. 164; trans. p. 190.
91. For an analogue see the *Arabian Nights*, the 382nd Night, V, 65-68.
92. "Gulistan," *Kulliyat*, p. 163; trans. Rehatsek, p. 188.
93. *Ibid.*, p. 169; trans. 197.
94. These numbers refer to the Wickens translation of the "Bustan," where the anecdotes are numbered 43 through 62. Anecdotes are not numbered in the Furughi edition, but if numbered 43 through 62 they will correspond to the English.
95. Badi'ullah Dabirinizhad, "Tasavvuf dar nazar-i Sa'di," *Maqalati darbarah-yi zindigi va shi'r-i Sa'di*, pp. 176-81.
96. "Bustan," *Kulliyat*, p. 305; trans. Wickens, ll. 1957-59.
97. "Badayi'," *Kulliyat*, p. 725.
98. "Bustan," *Kulliyat*, p. 357; trans. Wickens, ll. 3105-8.
99. *Ibid.*, p. 234; trans. l. 354.
100. *Ibid.*, p. 364; trans. ll. 3257, 3264-66. Several anecdotes and lyrical poems of Sa'di illustrate the *shahid's* cruel treatment of the lover. (For example, the "Bustan," *Kulliyat*, pp. 293-95, 296-97; trans. Wickens, ll. 1707-36, 1737-41, 1765-82; the "Badayi'," *Kulliyat*, p. 785; and the "Hazliyyat," p. 354.) But the lover need not suffer long, for soon the lovely down growing on the boy's upper lip becomes coarse and his beard

sprouts, destroying his beauty. Satirical Persian literature is filled with invectives about the bearded youth. (See the "Hazliyyat," pp. 344, 345; and the "Ruba'iyyat," *Kulliyat*, pp. 893, 899, 902.) 'Ubayd Zakani's "Rishnamah" (The Book of the Beard) is the longest satire on the subject. A *carpe diem* dream vision in ornate prose interspersed with verse, the work reminds handsome boys that their beauty is short-lived and exhorts them to treat their admirers kindly. (See the *Kulliyat-i 'Ubayd Zakani*, pp. 32-42.)

101. "Bustan," *Kulliyat*, p. 364; trans. Wickens, ll. 3258.
102. See p. 164 in the original and p. 190 in the translation.
103. Ali Akbar Dihkhuda, *Lughatnamah*, ed. Muhammad Mu'in and Sayyid Ja'far Shahidi (Tehran, 1337-1353/1959-1979), s.v. *shahid*, pp. 160-61.
104. *Ibid.*, s.v. *amrad* and *mukhannas*.
105. "Gulistan," *Kulliyat*, p. 138; trans. Rehatsek, pp. 154-55. The pun on *ab* (water) and *ab-i mardān* (semen) is lost in the translation.
106. See the *Lughatnamah*, under the terms listed.
107. Quoted by Robert Surieu, *Sarve Naz*, p. 16. For the Zoroastrian condemnation of the homosexual act see the "Vendidad" in *The Zend-Avesta*, trans. James Darmesteter, Sacred Books of the East, IV (Oxford: Clarendon, 1880), pp. 101-02.
108. iv, 15 and 16.
109. vii, 80-84; xi, 77-83; xxvi, 160-74, and xxix, 28-30.
110. P. 169; trans. Wickens, pp. 123-24.
111. *Ibid.*, pp. 225, 232; trans. p. 169, 174.
112. *Ibid.*, 223-24; trans. 168; see also the *Tutinamah: Jawahir al-asmar*, pp. 27-28, where a father unsuccessfully tries to alter his son's effeminate demeanor.

It is believed here that the son is *mukhannas* because he is the fruit of incest.

113. "Bustan," *Kulliyat*, pp. 363-64; trans. Wickens, 11. 3252-55.
114. P. 79, translation mine.
115. *Qabusnamah*, p. 81; translation mine. See also the *Lughatnamah*, s.v. *ghulam*.
116. *Qabusnamah*, pp. 59-60; trans. Levy, p. 75.
117. *Ibid.*, p. 60; trans. Levy, p. 76. Levy makes the beloved female, even though the context makes a female improbable. The Nafisi edition of the *Qabusnamah* uses the masculine *ma'shuq* (beloved).
118. *Ibid.*, p. 61; trans. Levy, p. 77.
119. *Ibid.*, p. 61; trans. Levy, pp. 77, 78.
120. Pp. 124-25; trans. Rehatsek, pp. 135-38.
121. See *Lughatnamah*, s.v. *musahaqah* and *tabaq zadan*, words for lesbian practices. For current religious laws against homosexual and lesbian acts (*lavat*, *musahaqah*) see paragraphs 154-64 of the *Layihah-yi Qisas*, ratified by Iran's present government. Repeat offenders may be punished by death (par. 161).
122. *Voyages*, VI, 25. Translated in Robert Surieu, *Sarve Naz*, pp. 135, 145.
123. *Arabian Nights*, IV, 234, n. 1.
124. *Ibid.*, pp. 233-34.
125. On courtly love see Andreas Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, trans. John Jay Parry (New York: Ungar, 1959); and C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958).
126. For edition and translation see note 32, above.

127. For edition see note 28, above.

128. *Sarve Naz*, p. 7.